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6-8-1964

### Montana State University 1964 Baccalaureate Address

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#### Recommended Citation

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FOR RELEASE A. M. MONDAY, JUNE 8

The president of Carroll College, Helena, issued a warning about the dangers to education in a materialistic age and a plea for restoration of faith to higher education in his baccalaureate address Sunday to the Montana State University class of '64.

Calling the importance of the "innocuous" New York Regents' prayer outlawed by the Supreme Court "symbolic rather than educational," the <sup>Very</sup> Rev. Anthony M. Brown said that, whatever the constitutional issues involved, public reaction to the Court's decision betrays a profound feeling of disquietude about the nation's youth.

Father Brown told the class that "perhaps ... we shall find that the Supreme Court's greatest contribution has not been in the protection of constitutional principles - it is hard to believe that the historic principle of separation of church and state was truly threatened by such pallid practices - but that it has forced on us a reassessment of the kinds of moral training that are appropriate for youth in a pluralistic society."

The problem of the loss of moral and spiritual fiber in our nation is not a "Johnny Come Lately," according to Father Brown, the recipient, in 1958, of the first earned doctorate granted by MSU. It started germinating long before Nietzsche said, "God is dead ... what are these churches if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"

He traced the origins of much of today's educational philosophy to 19th century German educators, who taught that a university's first duty was to discover truth, not propagate it.

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As expressed by Harvard President Eliot, "Exposition, not imposition, of opinions is the professor's part." Carroll President Brown called this a harmless statement when used to express the new freedom which had come to the university, but a dangerous statement if not balanced by what is equally fundamental: There are eternal truths which should be passed from generation to generation, and man will neglect them at his peril.

Science came to include the study of mind as well as the so-called physical world, Father Brown continued. What could be demonstrated was to be believed; what could not be demonstrated was to be held in question until more facts were available. Auguste Comte of France provided the philosophical support of this position with his Positivism, which held that only that which can be demonstrated to man's senses is to be believed.

This philosophy gained currency in American educational circles so that Kilpatrick, a popular interpreter of John Dewey, could write: "Your standards to the end will, and should, remain hypotheses." Such statements weakened for many the religious basis for morality, and entirely removed it for others, the speaker said.

He contrasted this attitude with that of the citizen who has come to know a few important things: Man on his highest level believes in the absoluteness of God. What is right in His sight is eternally right, and what is wrong is eternally wrong. The right is to be embraced and struggled for, and must be maintained and vindicated at the conference table and through the courts. What is wrong must be avoided and condemned at any cost.

Citizens who espouse this philosophy do not scheme for personal advantage, a privilege allowed by the philosophy that all truth is relative, the speaker declared.

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Alluding to the frequent reference today to the threat of Communism in America, Father Brown charged that the ground was already prepared in our universities when Communism came. Karl Marx learned Comte's Positivism and came to look upon man, not God, as the final authority. With this same philosophy shot through American educational thought, Communism, when it came, fell on the fertile soil of a materialistic age. It will continue to grow so long as our standards remain hypotheses, he said.

"The object of education is truth - the whole truth - in which religious truth occupies a pre-eminent place and exercises an integrating force," the college president insisted, adding that Christian education has a special concern for teaching the Judeo-Christian ethic. To exclude religious truth, the truth about man's origin in God and his ultimate destiny, is to truncate education, he said.

And religious truth has been truncated, he went on, because much of Western humanism is dead. Men leave aside the mysteries of contingency and transitoriness for the certainties of research, production, consumption, so it is nearly possible to paraphrase Nietzsche and say: "Man is dead...What are these buildings, these tunnels, these roads, if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of man?"

"God is not dead," Father Brown said. "He will come back to the colleges when man comes back."

The educator quoted Charles Malik, the representative in the United Nations of little Lebanon, who said: "The future belongs to that country and to that people who, seeking understanding and good will and refusing to have pleasure as their dominant quest, are not deceived by their own material resources into thinking they are strong, but are able to call forth from within themselves,

(more)



not out of the bowels of their earth, sufficient strength and vision with which to embrace the whole world in love and truth."

When it dawns ~~on~~ upon America how much is required of her to develop this kind of humanity, the place of religion in education, and therefore of Christian education in the national common good, will be more keenly appreciated and more generously acknowledged, Father Brown believes. Then, he says, we may find an answer to our lack of moral and spiritual strength.

"Now that we have seen the danger signals of the impact of a materialistic age and the resulting moral and spiritual deterioration, let us exert ourselves to bring faith into higher education," he exhorted the graduates.

